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Inventory for

Manuscript Collection
MS - 44

Barbour Family Papers

1848-1973

by
Elisabeth Meier
May 2019

6 boxes
2.4 linear feet
Accession no. 74.3.6-14, 74.3.67-184, and 97.132.3

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Abstract

Barbour Family

Papers, 1848-1973

6 boxes

Shipbuilders and steamboat operators from Brewer, Maine

Correspondence, ephemera, journals, and research notes from four generations of the Barbour family of Brewer, Maine. The bulk of the collection consists of Robert H. Barbour's research notes about steamers built at Samuel H. Barbour's shipyard in Brewer. It also contains original records of schooner operations and crew from the 1850s, material from the Bangor and Bar Harbor Steamboat Company and Penobscot Bay steamers, Florida in the 1890s, and the early twentieth century merchant marine.

Gift of the estate of Robert H. Barbour.

MS-044. Accession #74.3.6-14, .67-184; #97.132.3.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

Related material in repository: PC-042

Added entries—persons:

Barbour, George H. (1866-1955)
Barbour, Lester P. (1895-1985)
Barbour, Robert H. (1899-1973)
Barbour, Samuel H. (1839-1896)
Barbour, William (1805-1889)

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Bangor and Bar Harbor Steamboat Company
Leila (steam screw, yacht)
Silver Star (steam screw)
Viking (steam screw)

Added entries—key terms:

Brewer (ME)
Family – United States – History
Florida – Description and travel
Merchant marine
Penobscot Bay
Shipbuilding – Brewer, Maine
Shipyards – Brewer, Maine
Steamboat lines
Steamboats

Acquisition

The bulk of this collection was donated by the estate of Robert H. Barbour in 1974. A much smaller group, from Lester P. Barbour, was donated by Dr. Charles E. Burden in 1997.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

The collection is mostly in good condition. Newspaper clippings and other cheap papers are acidic and ageing, and the scrapbooks are very fragile.

Processing Notes

Much of this collection had been arranged by Robert H. Barbour prior to its arrival at Maine Maritime Museum. Most items were in clearly labeled folders. For the most part, the folder-level organization of the collection has not been altered. Some correspondence was re-filed in chronological order, but the research notes are grouped according to Barbour's method.

Because this collection is largely organized in original order, some types of material are filed in more than one place. In particular, Robert H. Barbour often wrote to his father, George H. Barbour, for information on family vessels and placed his father's responses with his research notes on those vessels. However, George's letters often include comments on personal and family life, and are worth reading along with those filed under family correspondence.

Related Materials

PC-42 contains the photographs that were donated with both portions of this manuscript collection, in both 1974 and 1997. It is an extensive collection on topics of family interest, including images of relatives, Barbour vessels, local scenes of Bangor and Brewer, images of Florida in the 1890s, photographs of US Army camps in World War I, scenes of docks and cargo handling from the 1920s, and photographs and postcards collected while travelling.

Historical Note

This collection has material from four generations of one branch of the Barbour family. The first generation represented is William Barbour, born on Isle au Haut, Maine, in 1805. William was a master mariner who retired from the sea in the 1850s to become a farmer and maritime entrepreneur in Verona, Maine. He married Susan Staples and had nine children. (For a full genealogy, see Appendix B.)

William Barbour's 6th child, Samuel H. Barbour, was born in Belfast, Maine in 1839. Like his father, Samuel started his career at sea, eventually taking command of coasting schooners. He also worked as a shipbuilder. His first recorded vessel was the *Maude Barbour* (three-mast schooner), launched in Brewer in 1872, which he commanded for several years. However, Samuel soon turned his attention to steamers and local passenger service. He launched the *May Field* (screw steamer) in the spring of 1875, the first of many small steamboats built by the family on commission or for their own use. (For a complete list, see Appendix A). The *May Field* was built to operate between Bangor and Bar Harbor, a business that Samuel later expanded into the Bangor and Bar Harbor Steamboat Company.

Samuel H. Barbour married Alice A. Hall in 1865. They had eight children and lived in Brewer. During winters when there were no new vessels under construction, the family

occasionally took one of their own steamers to Florida, where they owned an orange grove near Georgetown. Samuel died in 1896.

Samuel's oldest son, George Hall Barbour (1866-1955), grew up to be a captain on the family steamers in Penobscot Bay. With his brother, Henry, George took over the family shipyard and steamboat line after their father's death. When that business wound down in the 1910s, George switched to ocean-going steamers, usually sailing as mate. He retired in the 1930s and spent the rest of his life near St. Petersburg, Florida.

George Hall Barbour married Alta M. Hawes in 1891. They had three sons. The oldest, Lester P. Barbour (b. 1895), spent his early career at sea in the merchant marine. Lester later became a florist in Biddeford, Maine.

George's younger son, Robert (b. 1899), served in the US Army during World War I and later became an engineer with the Bangor Hydroelectric Company. Although he did not go to sea himself, Robert developed a keen interest in his family's history. He and his wife, Edna Knowlton Barbour, spent years recovering information on the shipyard and steamboat company as well as family genealogy. (Most of the family's business records had been destroyed in the Bangor fire of 1911.) In the process, Robert became part of a burgeoning community of steamboat historians that included John M. Richardson and Robert B. Applebee.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains papers from four generations of the Barbour family of Brewer, Maine. It is organized by generation: I. William Barbour Jr., II. Samuel H. Barbour, III. George H. Barbour, and IV. Robert H. Barbour and Lester P. Barbour. The bulk of the collection consists of Robert H. Barbour's research notes into the family history, but there are also letters, diaries, accounts, and other material from the family's maritime heyday.

William Barbour Jr. is represented by a single account book covering a variety of business and domestic accounts between 1848 and 1870. It includes records for the *Mary Francis* (schooner), *Frank Maria* (schooner), *Wellington* (schooner) and *Swan* (schooner); accounts for sailors shipped on these or other vessels, and wages paid to various laborers. It also includes household accounts for Barbour's family.

Samuel H. Barbour is primarily represented by a journal kept by himself and his children between 1878 and 1892. It includes comments about daily life in Brewer, some details about shipbuilding in the family yard, and fairly regular entries on winter trips to Florida that the family took on some of their steamers. There are also a few certificates and other legal documents related to vessels that Samuel built or commanded.

More of the collection is related to Samuel's son, George Hall Barbour. This includes logs and journals from his service aboard the *Leila* (screw steamer, yacht), *Silver Star* (screw steamer), and *Viking* (screw steamer), which provide some of the only records of daily operations aboard Barbour vessels. Letters to his wife, Alta, provide more detail of the same period. There are also records of his later career as a mate in the US Merchant Marine in the 1920s and 1930s and extensive autobiographical notes. More information on George's retirement in Florida can also be found in his son, Robert's, research notes, as Robert often filed his father's letters according to information they contained regarding family vessels.

Robert H. Barbour, who assembled most of this collection, also represents the bulk of it. There are some documents from his early life and career, but the majority of his material is related to his sharp interest in the family's maritime history. There are detailed letters to and from his father, George Hall Barbour, about the latter's memories of the Barbour business, as

well as correspondence with other notable steamship historians and Barbour's own extensive research notes on the family fleet. In addition to information on Barbour vessels, this section reflects the connections and research interests of mid-twentieth century maritime historians.

There are also a few papers from Robert's brother, Lester P. Barbour, mostly related to his time in the US Navy and Merchant Marine around World War I.

Finally, this collection contains a variety of documents and ephemera collected by the Barbour family. These include tickets, promotional materials, and schedules from the Bangor & Bar Harbor Steamboat Company and other local steamship lines, as well as clippings and scrapbooks on topics related to family or local interest.

Box and Folder List

Series I: Family and Personal Papers

William Barbour, Jr.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Account book, 1848-1870

Samuel H. Barbour

1	2	Family journal, 1878-1892
	3	Transcript of family journal by Robert H. Barbour
	4	Vessel papers, *Cimbria* (screw steamer), *Hattie H. Barbour* (schooner), and *Winonah* (screw steamer)

George H. Barbour

Career

1	5	Pilot and master's licenses, 1888-1932
		Barbour family fleet
	6	Log, *Leila* (screw steamer, yacht), 1883
	7	Log, *Silver Star* (screw steamer), 1886
	8	Journal, *Viking* (screw steamer), 1891, through the Erie Canal
	9	Steamship service records and letters of recommendation, 1918-1934
	10	Correspondence, employment and union membership, 1915-1936
	11	Abstract log, *Edgefield* (screw steamer), 1920

Personal

	12	Birth certificate, passport, licenses, 1866-1929
	13	Health and financial records, 1900-1955
	14	Personal and family papers and ephemera, 1891-1957
		Correspondence between George H. Barbour and Alta Hawes Barbour
	15	Winter 1889-1890, Georgetown, Florida
	16	June – July 1891, *Viking*, Erie Canal
	17	August – September 1891, Penobscot Bay
	18	Autobiography and history of the Barbour shipyard
	19	Autobiographical notes
	20	"Down in the Sunny South"
	21	Sketch of a small steamboat, unidentified

Alta Hawes Barbour

	22	Correspondence with family and friends, 1895-1896
	23	Miscellaneous, Hawes and Tibbetts family, 1807-1898

Robert H. Barbour

Personal

2 1 Birth certificate (copy)
2 Schoolwork and natural history
3 World War I
4 Résumés and professional material

Correspondence, family

5 George H. Barbour, 1915-1918
6 George H. Barbour and Edna K. Barbour, 1940-1945
7 George H. Barbour, 1946-1953
8 Edna (Knowlton) Barbour, 1914
9 Leland Hawkins, 1967-1969
10 Sandra Hawkins MacGillivray, 1966-1971
11 Family, miscellaneous, 1933-1970

Correspondence, researchers and friends

12 Robert B. Applebee, 1946-1950
13 Byron M. Boyles, 1946-1948
14 Henry Erskine, 1947-1950
15 R. Loren Graham, 1946-1962
16 Edward D. Hamilton, 1947-1953
17 Charles F. H. Menges, 1947-1956
18 Edwin A. Patt, Steamship Historical Society of America, 1946-1953
29 John M. Richardson, 1941-1953
20 "Steamboat Days on the Penobscot," *Rockland Courier-Gazette*, clippings sent by John M. Richardson
21 Miscellaneous, steamboat enthusiasts, 1944-1963 and undated
22 Miscellaneous, personal, 1944-1973
23 Christmas cards, 1949-1969

Societies and professional organizations

24 103rd Infantry, Veterans' Association
25 Bath Marine Museum (Maine Maritime Museum)
26 Maine Archaeological Society
27 Maine State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers
28 Newcomen Society
29 Nautical Research Guild
30 Steamship Historical Society of America
31 Kiwanis, American Legion, Freemasons, and Shriners
32 Personal ephemera; miscellaneous

Research Notes

Barbour vessels

3 1 Barbour shipyard
2 Early output, sailing vessels, and notes on multiple vessels
3 *Alice* (sloop), built 1874
4 *Alice* (screw steamer), built 1884

	5	*Awashonks* (screw steamer), 1893
	6	*Bon-Ton* (screw steamer), 1884
	7	*Castine* (screw steamer), 1889
	8	*Cimbria* (screw steamer), 1882
	9	*City of Bangor* (*City of Portland*) (screw steamer), 1879
	10	*City of Waterville* (sidewheel steamer), 1890
	11	*Clara May* (two-mast schooner), 1882
	12	*Creedmore* (screw steamer), 1884
	13	*Dolphin* (screw steamer), 1884
	14	*Florence* (screw steamer), 1882
	15	*Gertrude Lunt* (steamer), 1892
	16	*Golden-Rod* (steamer), 1893
	17	*Henry Morrison* (sidewheel steamer), 1854, rebuilt 1887
	18	*Islesford* (screw steamer), 1893
	19	*Leila* (screw steamer, yacht), 1883
	20	*Little Buttercup* (steamer), 1881
	21	*Lizzie M. Snow* (steamer), 1889
	22	*Marjory* (screw steamer), 1898
	23	*Mascot* (screw steamer), 1894
	24	*May Field* (screw steamer), 1875
	25	*Navis* (ex-*Alta*) (screw steamer, yacht), 1894
	26	*Nellie Kane* (screw steamer), 1881
	27	*Queen City* (screw steamer), 1892
	28	*Sedgewick* (screw steamer), 1892
	29	*Silver Star* (steamer), 1886
4	1	*Stockton* (ex-*M & M*), 1886, rebuilt 1898
	2	*Susie May* (screw steamer), 1886
	3	*Tremont* (screw steamer), 1895
	4	*Una* (screw steamer, yacht), 1892
	5	*Verona* (screw steamer), 1902
	6	*Viking* (screw steamer), acquired 1891
	7	*Winonah* (screw steamer), 1886
	8	Bangor and Bar Harbor Steamboat Company
	9	Interview with Charles Snow, engineer on Barbour vessels
		Local and maritime history
	10	History of Bangor and early Maine
	11	History of Brewer, Maine
	12	Shipbuilding, Bangor and Brewer
	13	Sailing vessels, Bangor-area
	14	*Thomas J. Stewart* (barkentine)
	15	Steamers, Penobscot River
	16	Steamers, Penobscot Bay and Maine coast
	17	“Copied notes,” likely from local newspapers
	18	Order forms, book lists, and research aids
		Family history and genealogy
	19	Barbour family genealogy, general, multiple generations, Knowlton family

5	1	William E. Barbour (1774-1819)
	2	William Barbour II (1805-1889)
	3	Thomas Barbour (1827-1902)
	4	William Barbour III (1829-1899) and family
	5	Mary Ann Barbour Higgins (1834-1904), Elisha Higgins, and family
	6	Elisha Higgins and family
	7	Samuel H. Barbour (1839-1896)
	8	Alta Hawes Barbour and family
	9	Maude Barbour Hawkins and family
	10	Barbour family Liverpool jug
	11	Miscellaneous research notes

Edna Knowlton Barbour

	12	Correspondence, 1938-1943 and undated
	13	Genealogical societies

Lester P. Barbour

	14	Merchant Marine papers
	15	US Navy, World War I
	16	Notes on genealogy

Series II: Collections and Ephemera

Box	Folder	
		Primary Documents collected by Robert H. Barbour
5	17	Stockton Yard (shipbuilders) *Major Deering* (*Major Dearing*) (schooner), 1862 *Rapid* (schooner), 1837 Dry goods account, unidentified
		Ephemera
	18	Bangor & Bar Harbor Steamboat Co.
	19	Other Maine steamboat companies
	20	Miscellaneous
		Pamphlets
	21	"Our Way Mark," 2nd Baptist Church, Bangor, 1898
	22	"The By-Laws and Membership Roll of the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Maine," 1904
	23	"Elijah Ormsbee," by Edwin A. Patt, 1946 "John Carver (1799-1867): Builder of Wooden Ships upon the Penobscot Bay!" by Clifford N. Carver, 1957

"The Bestons of Chimney Farm," by Larry Willard, *Yankee Magazine*, 1950

24 *Ancient Pemaquid Restoration News Journal*, volume 1 no. 1-2, 1966

Newspaper Clippings

25 Collected by Robert H. Barbour

26 Collected by Lester P. Barbour

Scrapbooks

6 1 Steamship news and letterheads, c. 1885

2 Deer Isle, kept by Edna K. Barbour, c. 1935

3 World War II, c. 1940-1941

4 Steamboats, Kiwanis, and Brewer High School, likely kept by Robert H. Barbour, c. 1935-1955

Appendix A
Vessels Built by the Barbour Family

1872 *Maude Barbour* (three-mast schooner)
1874 *Alice* (sloop)
1875 *May Field* (screw steamer)
1879 *City of Bangor* (screw steamer) (later *City of Portland*)
1881 *Aetna* (three-mast schooner)
Annie Lord (three-mast schooner)
Little Buttercup (screw steamer)
Nellie Kane (screw steamer)
Queen City (screw steamer)
1882 *Clara May* (two-mast schooner)
Cimbria (screw steamer)
Florence (screw steamer)
1883 *Hattie H. Barbour* (three-mast schooner)
Leila (screw steamer, yacht)
1884 *Alice* (screw steamer)
Bon-Ton (screw steamer)
Creedmore (screw steamer)
Dolphin (screw steamer)
1886 *Silver Star* (screw steamer)
Susie May (screw steamer)
Winonah (screw steamer)
1889 *Castine* (screw steamer)
Lizzie M. Snow (screw steamer)
1890 *City of Waterville* (sidewheel steamer)
1892 *Gertrude Lunt* (screw steamer)
Queen City (screw steamer)
Sedgewick (screw steamer)
Una (screw steamer)
1893 *Awashonks* (screw steamer)
Golden-Rod (screw steamer)
Islesford (screw steamer)
1894 *Mascot* (screw steamer)
Navis (built *Alta*) (screw steamer, yacht)
1895 *Tremont* (screw steamer)
1897 *City of Bangor* (screw steamer)
1898 *Marjorie* (screw steamer)
1902 *Verona* (screw steamer)

Appendix B
Barbour Family
Genealogy
(surname 'Barbour,'
unless noted)